

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in light of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1 and 3-5 are pending. Claims 2 and 6-8 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 9 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added. Claims 1 and 3-5 are allowed.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1 and 3-5 are allowed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

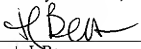
Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,761,327 to Shiga et al. ("Shiga"). The Examiner states that Shiga discloses all of the features of the claimed invention. In the interests of prosecution efficiency, Applicants cancel claim 9 without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering this rejection moot. Applicants reserve the right to file continuing applications based on any of the canceled claims at a later time.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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